



**MicroProse Software**

SOFTWARE FOR THE IBM PC / PC JR FAMILY OF COMPUTERS

# HELLCAT ACE

by R. Donald Awalt  
and Sid Meier  
for Microprose Software

## GAME OVERVIEW

HELLCAT ACE is a game which challenges your nerve, flying skill, and knowledge of air to air combat tactics. You fly your World War II plane against a computer controlled airplane(s) in one of fifteen different scenarios. Your goal is to complete five missions and become an ACE!

## LOADING THE GAME

This package contains versions of HellCat Ace specifically enhanced for the IBM PC and PC Jr. Place the Hellcat Ace game disk in drive A, and either turn your computer on or press the control-Alt-Delete keys simultaneously if your computer is already on. (Note that HellCat Ace cannot be copied onto a hard disk). Once the title page appears, press any key to start the game, or wait 15-20 seconds and a demo will automatically start. Always keep the HellCat Ace game disk in the drive, and **DO NOT** ever place a write-protect tab on the disk.

Note that the demo will start from any screen if a key or joystick is not used within 15-20 seconds.

## GAME OPTIONS

The first screen allows you to indicate the number of players and to select the desired game scenario. This screen displays the game title followed by a list of the scenarios available. See the "SCENARIOS" section for a description of each scenario. Scenario 1 is recommended for beginners. Press the F1 or F3 keys until the desired scenario number appears at the bottom of the screen. Press the F2 or F4 keys until the desired number of players appears at the bottom of the screen. Up to four players may play. Then press ENTER.

The next screen summarizes your mission in this scenario, indicates the scores and victories accumulated so far (if any), and allows you to select the difficulty level and number of opposing aircraft (1 or 2). Difficulty level 0 is the easiest, level 3 is the most difficult. Use the F1 or F3 keys to make the difficulty selection and the F2 or F4 keys to select the number of planes. To skip this scenario, press F10. In multi-player games the player whose turn is next is indicated on the "YOUR MISSION" line.

Press ENTER when you are ready to begin. The first time you play the game each time it is booted from disk, a configuration screen will appear. Use the F1 key to eliminate joystick use (the game

can always be played by keyboard), use F2 key to turn off sound, use F3 and F4 to adjust the screen left or right (may be required on some TV sets or monitors), and use F10 to adjust your joystick for proper response. Due to the difference in speed of the different types of IBM PCs, the game will automatically lead you through joystick adjustment the first time you boot the game disk. Read the instructions on this screen if you are playing the game without the joystick (and have the game set to use joystick) and wish to bypass the joystick configuration. As this information is saved on the disk, you do not have to adjust your joystick each time you play the game. To PAUSE the game press ctrl key and num-lock simultaneously (or Fn-pause keys on the PC-Jr). When you are ready to resume, press any key.

## THE GAME DISPLAY

Your instrument panel at the bottom of the screen provides you with the following information:

**MIRROR:** If your opponent is behind you he will generally appear in your rear-view mirror. This indicates where and how far away he is.

**SPEED:** Your current speed in knots per hour. If your speed drops below 140 knots you will stall and controlling the plane will be difficult.

**ALTITUDE:** Your current altitude in feet. Allowing your altitude to fall below zero will result in the immediate termination of your mission.

**COURSE:** The direction in which your plane is flying, expressed in degrees. Zero degrees is due North, 90 degrees is East, 180 degrees is South, and 270 degrees is West.

**AMMO:** The number of bursts of ammunition remaining in your guns.

**POWER:** Your current throttle setting (0 to 20). Twenty is maximum power.

The upper portion of the screen shows the view out of your windscreen. The object in the center of the screen is your gunsight. The sky and sea are white and blue respectively. The orientation of the horizon indicates your current altitude. If the horizon is below your sight you are climbing. If the horizon is above your sight you are diving. If the horizon is tilted to the right you are banked to the left. If the horizon is tilted to the left you are banked to the right. Your opponent's plane(s) will be visible if he is in front of you.

## FLYING YOUR AIRPLANE

In order to skillfully fly your plane, you must learn to turn, climb, and dive. As you become more proficient you will find yourself doing loops, rolls, and split-S maneuvers.

To cause your plane to turn you must bank (tilt) your plane. Bank is controlled by pressing the joy-stick to one side or the other. The steeper your plane is banked, the more rapid the turn will be. The most rapid turn occurs when the horizon appears to be vertical. Banking further puts you into an inverted flight attitude and reduces the turn rate.

To cause your plane to climb, pull back on the stick. This pulls the nose of your plane up. Your speed will generally decrease when climbing. If you have enough speed you can loop or halfloop the plane by pulling back until the horizon appears again.

To dive push the stick forward. Your speed will increase when diving. If your plane is steeply banked, it is much less responsive to the elevator: climbing and diving are more difficult. This situation often results in a snap roll or spin. During a spin your plane will gyrate uncontrollably.

To fire your guns, press the red joystick button (button 1). You will see your tracers through the forward windscreen. Small multi-colored pieces will fly off your opponent's plane if your bullets hit. Your guns fire straight ahead, note the effect of turning or changes altitude on the path of the bullets. Your ammunition is limited, close range shots are recommended. Try to lead your opponent's plane if he is not flying directly towards or away from you. Line up your next shot immediately, don't wait!

F1 and F9 controls your throttle. Pressing F1 increases power, pressing F9 decreases power. Press the black joystick button (button 2) if you wish to attempt to bail out. Reduce speed before trying to bail out. (Bailout below 2000 feet or above 150 knots is not likely to be successful.)

## **COMBAT TACTICS**

Always keep in mind that this game takes place in a three dimensional airspace. Try to visualize where your opponent is relative to your plane and what maneuver you are executing. Note also in what direction your opponent is flying. Try to get behind him or cause him to fly into your sights.

The scenarios fall into two general categories: those in which your mission is to shoot down your opponent, and those in which your mission requires you to avoid being shot down yourself.

The former requires aggressive flying. Try to keep your opponent in front of you. If he gets behind you, try an Immelmann or split-S (a half-roll followed by a half-loop). Turning contests are sometimes successful against heavy enemy bombers but it is usually hard to get a clean shot against a nimble Zero fighter.

If the scenario calls for you to avoid being shot down you're generally flying a less maneuverable bomber. It will be difficult to keep your opponent in front of you. Keep your eye on the rear-view mirror. If he is close and closing, take evasive action immediately. A tight turn or deliberate stall are two possibilities.

Your opponent's plane also fires straight ahead, so you are in danger when you see him heading towards you. The screen will flash red when you are hit. If your power drops to zero you have been severely damaged. Try to ditch or bail out.

## **THE SCENARIOS**

### **FLYING TIGER — August 13, 1940**

You are flying a P40 Tomahawk fighter with Colonel Claire Chennault's American Volunteer Group (Flying Tigers), contesting the Japanese invasion of China in early WWII. Ahead of you flies a Japanese medium bomber returning from a bombing mission. Your guns are loaded and primed. Shoot him down.

### **PEARL HARBOR — December 7, 1941**

You are flying a Brewster Buffalo fighter on single patrol over the main Pacific fleet anchorage at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. Suddenly you spot a Japanese Floatplane circling Pearl at 10,000 feet reporting vital information to the approaching attack wave. If you don't shoot him down and disrupt the attack you will be overwhelmed when it arrives.

### **WAKE ISLAND — December 11, 1941**

You are flying an F4F WildCat fighter. Offshore a Japanese invasion force is approaching the beach. You notice a Zero fighter dropping down for a strafing run against the Marine defenders.

### **CORAL SEA — May 8, 1942**

The first carrier battle of the war. You are flying a WildCat fighter on combat air patrol over the fleet. You drop to intercept a bomber beginning a low altitude torpedo run on the carrier YORKTOWN. If he sinks the carrier you will have nowhere to land.

## **MIDWAY — June 4, 1942**

The decisive sea battle of the war. US dive bombers sank four Japanese carriers. You are leading a squadron of SBD Dauntless bombers North to the Japanese fleet. Fly North and maintain your altitude while avoiding the Japanese defenders.

## **GUADALCANAL — September 3, 1942**

A Japanese Army fighter makes a surprise early morning strafing run on the Marine airstrip. Two planes are blazing, but your fighter is intact. You run to your WildCat and roar off the runway as he banks for another pass over Henderson Field.

## **SANTA CRUZ — October 26, 1942**

The carrier LEXINGTON is under heavy attack from Japanese dive and torpedo bombers. Two hits have been scored already and the "Lady Lex" has slowed and is listing. Above you at 12,000 feet VAL dive bomber is preparing to push over into dive. You must act quickly, this hit could be decisive.

## **GET YAMAMOTO — April 18, 1943**

American Intelligence has broken the Japanese code and learned that Admiral Yamamoto has scheduled an inspection visit to the island of Ballale, just within range of the P-38 Lightning with drop tanks. You have flown over six hundred miles. Ahead you spot the Admiral's plane. You must complete your mission quickly before his Zero escort drops down to intercept.

## **MARIANAS — June 19, 1944**

The last major carrier battle of the war. The Japanese launch massive air strikes against the American Task Force supporting the invasion of Saipan in the Marianas. You are flying a new F6F HellCat fighter, recently introduced as a replacement for the WildCat. As your second flight drops down to deal with a dive bomber squadron you engage the Zero escort.

## **LEYTE GULF — October 24, 1944**

The Japanese launch a desperate naval attack on the American fleet covering the Phillipines invasion. While the American carriers are drawn off to the North, the Japanese battleships slip through the Surigao Strait to attack the vulnerable transports. A group of planes is hastily pulled together and sent to slow the battleships. You are flying an old Devastator torpedo bomber. Your orders are to fly west (Course 270) to the Japanese fleet. Watch out for the Zeroes.

## **IWO JIMA — February 25, 1945**

The invasion of Iwo Jima threatens the Japanese mainland, putting the major Japanese cities within range of Super Fortress bombers. They respond by sending the best of their remaining pilots to oppose the invasion. You are cruising at 10,000 feet when you are attacked by a Japanese ace in a new Zero fighter.

## **KAMIKAZE — March 3, 1945**

The invasion of Iwo Jima also causes the Japanese to resort to kamikaze attacks: filling planes with bombs and explosives and diving into the American carriers. This tactic causes severe damage to the American Fleet. You are flying Combat Air Patrol when you are vectored to intercept a rapidly approaching kamikaze.

## **OKINAWA — April 2, 1945**

As the Americans invade the island of Okinawa, the Japanese intensify their attacks on the fleet. You are flying a HellCat Ace modified for night combat. Ahead you spot a Japanese fighter.

## **BAKA — April 15, 1944**

The Japanese continue thier kamikaze attack by introducing the "Baka". A swift rocket powered bomb dropped from a bomber and flown to its target. In this final mission of the war, you must shoot down this dangerous weapon before it disables your carrier.

## THE GRAND FINALE — September 1, 1945 (fictitious)

The Atomic Bomb was never dropped and your mission is to eliminate the Japanese air support for the upcoming invasion of mainland Japan. You are 500 miles offshore and you are encountering the leading edges of the entire remaining Japanese Air Force!!!

## THE RESULTS

The object of the game is to accumulate five (5) victories and become an official "ACE". At the end of the game you will receive a ranking based on victories, time, damage and ammunition used. Rankings are Rookie, Wingman, Pilot, Ace and W.G.F.P. (World's Greatest Fighter Pilot!).

There can be three results from a scenario: A VICTORY counts towards your total and allows you to continue to the next scenario, NO RESULT allows you to continue but does not contribute to your victory total, A LOSS ends the game. There are a number of ways in which a scenario may end:

1. You shoot down your opponent(s).  
**This always counts as a VICTORY.**
2. The time limit expires or you fly out of range of your opponent. In the MIDWAY and LEYTE GULF scenarios this counts as a victory. In the PEARL HARBOR, CORAL SEA, SANTA CRUZ, KAMIKAZE, BAKA, and GRAND FINALE scenarios failing to complete your mission means your base is destroyed - you are captured after a forced landing.  
**This counts as a LOSS. In all other scenarios this counts as NO RESULT.**
3. You bail out of your plane successfully. Press the trigger on joystick two to attempt to bail out. You have a better chance if your speed is low. The results are the same as 2. above, except that you can not win the MIDWAY and LEYTE GULF scenarios.  
**Results are the same as 3.**
4. You bail out and are captured.  
**This always counts as a LOSS.**
5. You ditch your plane in the water. You may ditch your plane by slowly and gently taking it to zero altitude. You will be picked up by a friendly submarine.  
**Results are the same as 3.**
6. You crash.  
**This always counts as a LOSS.**

## ADVANCED COMBAT AEROBATICS

**Loop** - Build up speed. Pull back on the stick. You will climb and roll onto your back. Keep the stick back as you begin to dive until the horizon reappears again. You will be flying level in the same direction in which you started. Used to get behind a plane close on your tail.

**Split-S** - from level flight roll until you are flying inverted. Pull back on the stick until the horizon disappears and appears again. Used to reverse direction quickly and lose altitude.

**Immelmann Turn** - Build up speed, then pull back on the stick until you have completed a half loop and are flying inverted. Now roll until you are level again. Used to reverse direction quickly while gaining altitude.

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We hope that you will enjoy this MicroProse game. Please send us your comments on this game or suggestions for other games you would like to see. MicroProse is dedicated to bringing you the most entertaining and challenging computer simulations available.

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# GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT HELLCAT ACE

1. To improve playability, the joystick can be used for information selection on the Scenario, Mission, Configuration, and Result Screens:

Joystick Function	Used To Simulate
Press Red Joystick Button (Button 1)	Enter
Joystick Backward	F1 or F2
Joystick Forward	F3 or F4
Press Black Joystick Button (Button 2)	Switches Joystick Movement between F1 / F3 and F2 / F4

2. Two keys can be pressed at anytime. The Escape key will start the game over at the Scenario Screen (or Title Page, depending on when it was pressed). No scores or results will be shown. A boss' key "]", can be pressed. Hit "]" again to resume game where left off.

## 3. Keyboard Commands

**Cursor Keys** — Simulate slight joystick movement in four directions

**Shift - Cursor Keys** — Simulate larger joystick movement in four directions

**Numlock** — Toggle the functions of Cursor and Shift - Cursor Keys

**F3** — Shoot

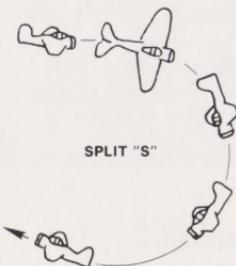
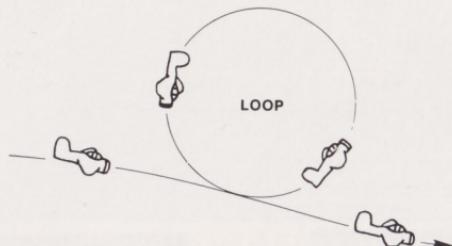
**F7** — Bail Out

**F1** — Increase Power

**F9** — Decrease Power

**Esc** — Start Game Over

**]** — Boss' Key and Return



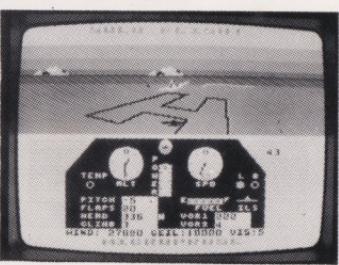
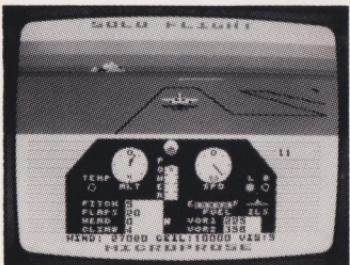
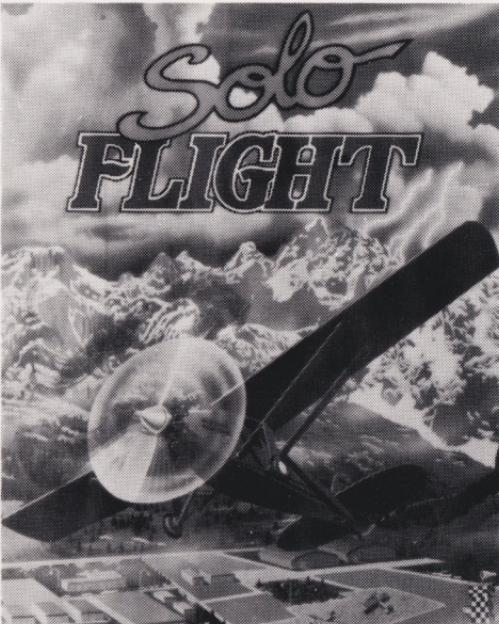
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10616 Beaver Dam Road, Hunt Valley, MD 21030  
(301) 667-1151